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AN

AUTUMN DREAM.



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AUTUMN DREAM.

BY

F. L. WADDELL,
"



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1857.

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TO
MRS. BEEKMAN FINLAY,
OF SARATOGA,

THIS IMPROMPTU ON A PORTRAIT BY HUDSON

TEACHER OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

Is respectfully Dedicated,

BY
F. L. WADDELL.

SARATOGA, *Sept*, 1856.

AN AUTUMN DREAM.



THE sultry evening sunbeams fall
O'er portrait on the homestead wall ;
Though Summer's carnival has fled,
With hours of pleasure, pure and gay,
Their memories consoling stay.
Delicious hours ! like flowers that shed
Ambrosial odors e'en when dead.
While Autumn holds her dreary sway,
Magnificent at closing day,
Sultana on her opal throne,

Ruling a melancholy globe,
The white Frost-Fays from Elfin zone,
Shape her of leaves a scarlet robe ;
Her brow, grape-cluster garland crown'd,
'Mid cornucopias strewn around.
Voluptuous in her drowsy ease,
In languid airs and hazy calms,
Heiress of Summer's legacies ;
Basking in harvests of her charms,
Ripe luscious fruits and garnered sheaves,
As sunset bounteous magic weaves,
Fretwork of beauty o'er her eves.
'Neath her pavilion, azure skies,
With curtains of the golden clouds,
The crimson flush as daylight dies,
The mask her hectic splendor shrouds.

Of seasons, nature's harem queen,
Sumptuous in her gaudy sheen,
As glossy plumage of the spray,
In rainbows o'er the water falls :
Flaunting her haloes o'er Decay,
Rioting her mosaic halls,
Stealing her vassal flowers away,
And hearsing her in snow-wreaths white.
Her grave in Desolation's night,
Her pall the flood of rosy light,
The Empyrean's scroll of fire shows,
Transcendent, her serene repose.
Yet tear of contemplation flows,
Sorrowing her last farewell ;
So glorious solemn her career,
The sullen and unbidden tear,

From Fancy's haunted well.
While sad emotions throb the breast,
Though radiant colors paint the west,
Amber purple, emerald cope
'Long the horizon's ruby slope,
Gay as sapphire plumes of hope,
Day's hues in eve's kaleidoscope.
Alluring paths to those domains
Where everlasting verdure reigns.
Beyond this dismal gulf of strife,
The deathless sphere of fadeless life ;
Effulgent ways of silver rays,
O'er which, in holy prophet days,
To earth angelic spirits came,
As Scriptures tell, on wings of flame.
In happier, purer days of old :

Days of affections manifold,
 When blessed Love was wealth untold,
 Before the subtle age of gold :
 Those winsome rays to longing eyes,
 Of weary pilgrims here below,
 To airy shrines their faith supplies.
 Soaring in blissful dreams to go,
 Where portal palaces arise,
 Amaranth gates of Paradise.
 The gorgeous of Creation's skies,
 In Autumn of our forest land,
 The foliage changing on each tree ;
 The Fall in woods primeval grand !
Titans in leafless majesty !
 Wailing the pageant of the year !
 On cloud-~~rebed~~ cone of mountains sere,

rebed

Sudden my wayward footsteps pause ;
By sympathetic impulse wooed ;
Spell-bound by ethereal cause.
A misanthrope of solitude,
Arrested, moody muse ! to gaze
On Portrait of the olden days !
Portrait, as chronicles do tell,
Of Woman beyond mortal praise ;
Surpassing exquisite, a belle !
Celestial in the sunset rays.
Stamped, Genius, by thy power sublime,
Cheating the ivied throes of time,
That moth of ages strives in vain,
Dust, rust, or mildew sent to stain ;
Still fresh to nature magic Art,
She almost from the frame doth start.

Although a century has roll'd,
So truthful hath the canvas told,
How Hudson's pencil was inspired,
With more than mortal passion fired,
Absorbing even now appears,
Her beauty through a hundred years.
Perchance this is the hallowed hour—
Twin-sister of the Aloe flower,
That in a century only blooms,
Thy spirit quits the realm of tombs—
Realm where Fate insatiate dooms,
Like flower with necromantic power,
The earth with charmed air perfumes.
As on thy picture on the wall,
The life-bestowing sunbeams fall.
Delightful thine imperious air,

Type of thy proud ancestral race :
Aristocratic lady fair,
Luxuriant is thy classic grace.
Light is abroad upon thy brow :
The flush of health glows on thee now :
Light from ceaseless beaming rays,
That round his throne of diamonds blaze,
The *Invisible* of eternity.
Dominions dazzling in that sea
Cerulean, where no eye can gaze,
Or poet artist's power portrays.
Who ruled, when wheeling in the void
Of chaos every orb to burn,
Each system, star, and asteroid,
And our planet in its turn,
To order true and nature's laws,

Creator of the primal cause.
Perchance electric vital spark,
Fell on thy habitation dark,
From one of myriad worlds in flight,
Ushering thee again to light !
For marvels in this wondrous age,
Stagger the stoic minds of sense,
With reason strife vexatious wage,
We doubt our own intelligence.
'Twas Science tamed the lightning's force,
To language harnesses its fires ;
Thought rules electric current's course—
Sky, ocean, earth obeys its wires.
Why not within the bounds of chance,
Promethean heat thy nature warm,
Restore thee from centennial trance,

And animate thy slumbering form ?
Expressions, dimples, smile thy cheek !
To the lone muse, distracted speak.
Thou art not phantom of the brain !
In earthquake of the trembling mind ;
I think thou art alive again.
In all the pomp of dazzling reign
Sweet belle ! in loveliness entwined,
Ne'er the world-conq'ring Roman clung,
Enamored slave, to her embrace,
Whose charms remain on history's tongue.
Egyptian Queen ! of peerless grace,
Cynosure of the human race,
Whose love posterity has rung,
By the asp suicidal stung,
As I do dwell upon thy face.

He threw a bauble crown away ;
The muse, her sanity to-day
Tried by the intellectual rule,
The weakest and the greatest fool,
Imagination's servile tool.
Dear Idol of my sickly vision,
Benignant from the climes Elysian,
Gay, fascinating apparition—
Excelsior of this world's perfection !
Why this untimely resurrection ?
Can this be an enchanted ground ?
Amazements startle and astound.
Thou art not disembodied, lo !
Thy tides of being ebb and flow,
Thy rounded form reality !
Alas ! no shadow do I see !

Body ! without a shadow ! pale !
Yet moving in the sun ! !
Kind *mercy* lift the mystic veil.
How can such things be done ?
And so unnatural be ?
Oh, wondrous prodigy !
By all that's heavenly, divine !
Thy spectral orbs, with beaming shine,
'Neath thy white skin the blue veins show ;
Thy blushes in the sunbeam glow,
Thus lily, long in darkness hid,
'Neath obelisk by the Pyramid,
Awakens from its trance-like death,
Exulting in the warm air's breath.
From peaceful cemetery's clod,
Have corpses long in mould interred,

Uncoffined been from rural sod ;
Nor ringlet of their tresses stirr'd—
Perfect in feature for a while,
Aye ! incorruptible their smile.
Existence merely seemed to sleep,
Exhaustion o'er their bodies creep ;
The village legends say they talk,
Those tomb-somnambulists do walk,
In lanes of moonlit church-yards stalk,
With viewless incantation spell,
At midnight toll the belfry bell.
'Mid glaciers lost, the Alpine rose,
The avalanche to sunlight throws,
A ray revives from chill repose.
Embalmed in ancient mummy's hand,
Though cycles have unnumbered flown,

The maize seed quicken and expand ;
From winding-sheet of centuries thrown,
Revealing germs of life to be
In universal alchemy :
The essence of Divinity.
In after ages, why thus thrive
The seed, and thou not be alive ?
Why more miraculous that thou
Renew thy mortal blossom now !
Aye ! stirs not thy all-gracious form ?
Thy bosom tremulously sigh ?
The hues, so flesh-like, tints so warm,
Can it be breeze-sprite rustling by,
Or locust in the thicket nigh ?
Why on me turn thy restless eyes,
Inconstant fires in starry guise ?

What awful meaning in them lies !
My coward nerves jar with surprise.
Fear's agues o'er me creep,
Imprisoned by their sibyl glare,
Now on me they approving stare ;
How can I listless dalliance keep,
With thy strange witchery,
Starting from thy sepulchral sleep,
Or even apathetic be,
Thou truant of Mortality?
So charming and surprising,
Coquette so tantalizing,
Why woo, win, conquer, and retain,
With fascination's frantic chain,
Thy captive in delirious wiles ?
Why past the gloom of mould'ring urns

From the angelic isles,
Thy welcome shade disturb'd returns
And from thy portrait smiles ?
This planet was thy mother Earth,
Thou cherub nursling of her love ;
To visit orb that gave thee birth,
Comest thou, spirit, from above ?
Upon what errand art thou sent,
As meteor from the firmament ?
Art messenger of woe or peace ;
Shall doubts, fierce conflicts, never cease ?
Excitements, more I gaze, increase ;
While drooping Patience—worn-out hag,
Whose crutchy limbs with palsy drag ;
Broods, as her thoughts consuming flag,
Like witch on desert waste,

No draught of hope to taste.
Art from the empire of the gnome ;
Ghost, flutt'ring round thy ancient home ;
Or Exile, like unresting Star,
Alternate sporting near or far ;
For ever doomed to roam ?
From unfathomed depths of space,
The vault no lightning thought can trace ;
Where the Pleiad lost hath gone,
From her weeping sisters torn ;
Region of the Atlantides,
Immemorial silent seas ;
The caverns vast, of Destinies,
Bewildering in thy phase !
Palpable in sunset rays :
How can this autumn stray sunbeam

Create a panting frenzied dream ?
Like vivid *Borealis* light,
To voyager lost in arctic night ;
A cheering mirage vision dear,
Of some familiar scene,
Corporeal thou dost appear
With humanizing mien.
Strange Being ! Divination fails ;
Conjecture deems thee woman real !
To Bard benighted, what avails
Genius of the chaste Ideal ?
Torturing thought on reason's rack,
Till mind grows hypochondriac !
With art's pure fable, matchless to behold,
If thou art not in marble dwelling cold.
Triumphs Humanity o'er death ?

Drink I not in thy nectar breath ?
Or do the flowers, dying in the grove,
Lull my rapt soul in ecstasy of love ?
As air, thy precious presence is around ;
As luscious music felt, its source unfound,
Thou art before me, and not under ground.
Can witchcraft of the sorceress tell
Thy aim, Incomprehensible ?
Nor Ghost art thou, or twilight Fairy ;
Mysterious, Solitary ! !
Art thou a Pythoness of Fate ?
Thy sunshine on her Dial Plate,
Why here from kingdom dark, unknown—
The catacomb of dusty nations ;
Thou undecaying one Alone ?
When caravans of generations

Have ne'er returned. In Pity give
Some whispering tone of speech :
Why in unanswering silence live,
Within embracing reach ?
Why, from thy hermitage, away—
The dingy charnel-house of clay,
Cannot Oblivion's ebon wing
Conceal a treasured thought of Earth,
Darling remembrance of thy spring ?
In girlhood, by the homestead hearth,
Some dainty sentimental throe,
Mid thy felicities of mirth ;
Or heart's deep tragedy of woe,
Unburied with thee, long ago,
Wanderer for evermore !
From the far *Egerian* shore.

Undying secret in thy breast,
 Thy lonesome heaven is unblest ;
 Uneasy is thy fevered rest,
 Propitious or alarming guest.
 How can I brook thy Siren look ?
 Thou hast my soul despairing shook ;
 And in its cloister-hidden nook,
 Thine image ever will abide !
 Life's *Nautilus*, on its troubled tide,
 Or warning Spirit ! speak, decide :
 Will they not move, those cherub lips ?
 Thou art not in the world's eclipse—
 The sleep of life's eternal night !
 Thou art the pulse of Joy's daylight,
 Unshrouding from lethargic swoon
 Thy long traditionary sleep,

Like occult stars at midnight's noon ;
Or *Venus*, in her transit-sweep,
Luminous every hundred years,
As now thy dashing form appears :
Oh bonnie heart—enrapturing belle !
By thy snow bosom's wavy swell,
Pearl of Fancy's murmuring shell ;
Unmask thy trance, thy century spell ;
The omen of thy witchery tell !
How all thy charms survive the past ;
How light and shadow both do last,
To keep thee in perpetual bloom,
Mocking the searing clutch of doom !
Lovely as Daisy by thy tomb—
Delicate Daisy ! Eye of day,
That seemingly doth fade away :

Whose charms returning springs resume,
 Defying the all-absorbing grave,
 Thrilling the pilgrim Muse, thy slave ;
 Sojourner by Art's *Mecca*-shrine,
 The intellectual *Palestine*,
 The incomparable divine ;
 With supernatural excess
 Of Joy, romantic mind to bless :
 The Beatific of the mind,
 Thou Paragon of womankind ;
 Sweet saint, in weird dim distance shrin'd.
 'Tis gone ! the *sunbeam* from the wall,
 Roused from the dream at reason's call,
 His marvellous credulity
 The penitential Bard can see,
 O'er lifeless picture veil the pall

Of evening's dusky low'ring wing ;
Darkling the bliss imagining :
'Twas Fancy's *Arab* wandering—
Yet lives that *beam* in memory's hall ;
And thy remembrance shall enthral,
Haunting the soul with dreamy spells—
With transports that the portrait tells,
Woke by a century's peerless belles !
Yet one stray ling'ring error dwells—
Thorn mid the wild leaves of my lay ;
That inspiration's storm excels,
The calm of meditation's sway :
Ghoul-like mutterings o'er the dead,
Whose spirits have for ever fled !
Gone to that undiscovered sphere,
Unknown to the *Chaldean* seer ;

Beyond the sunset splendors bright,
Fringing the spangled robe of night !
Sphere yielding skies, suns, stars, then light,
Veiled from all human knowledge here ;
Still rhapsody it is, they may,
The angels of a better day,
Look on us from their happy isle—
The pure, the good, departed blest,
There's solace in their picture-smile !
Unruffled be their tranquil rest,
Nor sacrilegious, gentle shade,
My vandal and profaning hand
With slumbering kindred lowly laid
Relenting pardon, nor upbraid !
Forgive, is the *supreme* command,
Though sceptic hath my plume portray'd.

For thee, seraphic, matchless maid,
The tumults of the heart—
Ne'er doubtful moment hath a thought,
With Faith-abiding promise fraught,
Wrestled from Truth to part.
Truth, mighty as the orb of light—
As glorious as the Cross,
When doubts obscure, and fears affright,
Or Error's whirlwinds toss ;
Harmless conflicting billows roll
The faithful pilot of the soul
Surer than needle to the pole ;
Conscience unerring, points the way,
O'er dangers, discord, or dismay,
To an immortal goal :
The *Heathen myth*, magnetic theme,

Delusive as mine autumn dream,
 Muse worshipping true art—
 The *medium's* superstition spurns,
 Vile, false, the *clairvoyant* creed !
 From nature, all around her learns
 In every scene can read,
 Unworthily to Heaven, turns
 With reverential awe.
 Knows *He* who rules the comet's track—
 The petals of the rose unfolds :
 Whose skirts *one* prophet saw :
 Who in his hand, creation holds ;
 Ordains the spirit comes not back ;
 Or Earth communion holds
 The unalterable law?

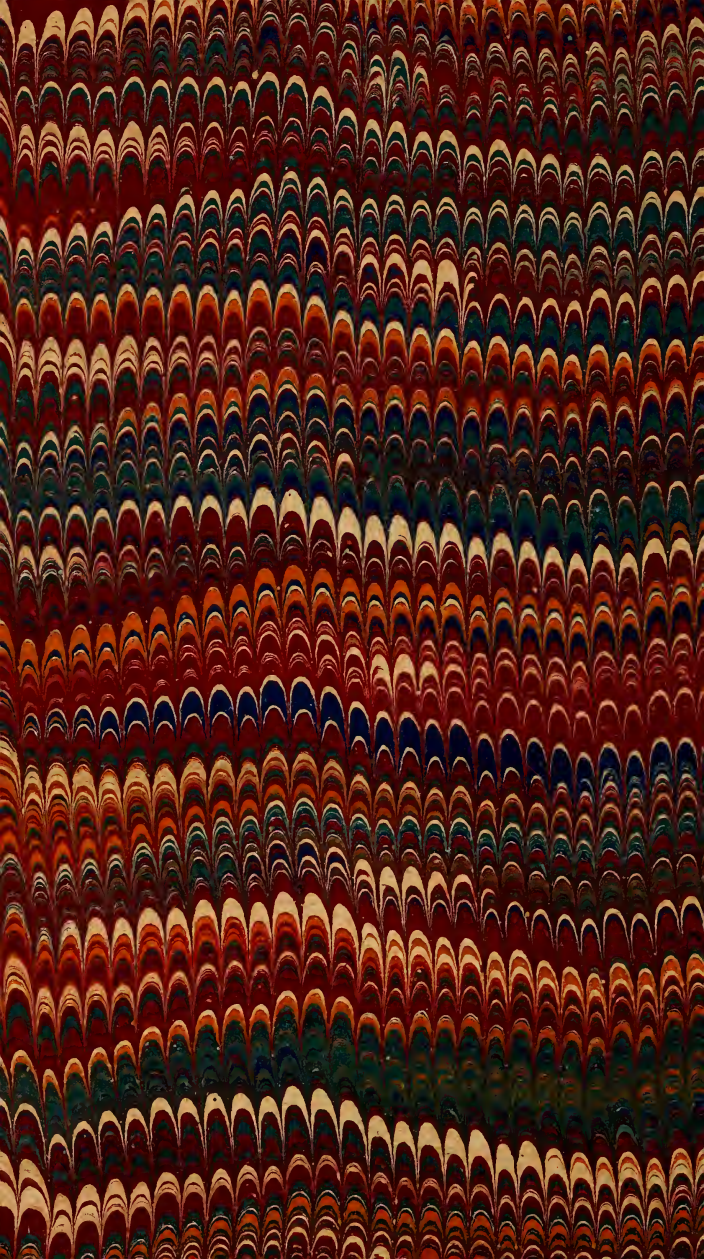
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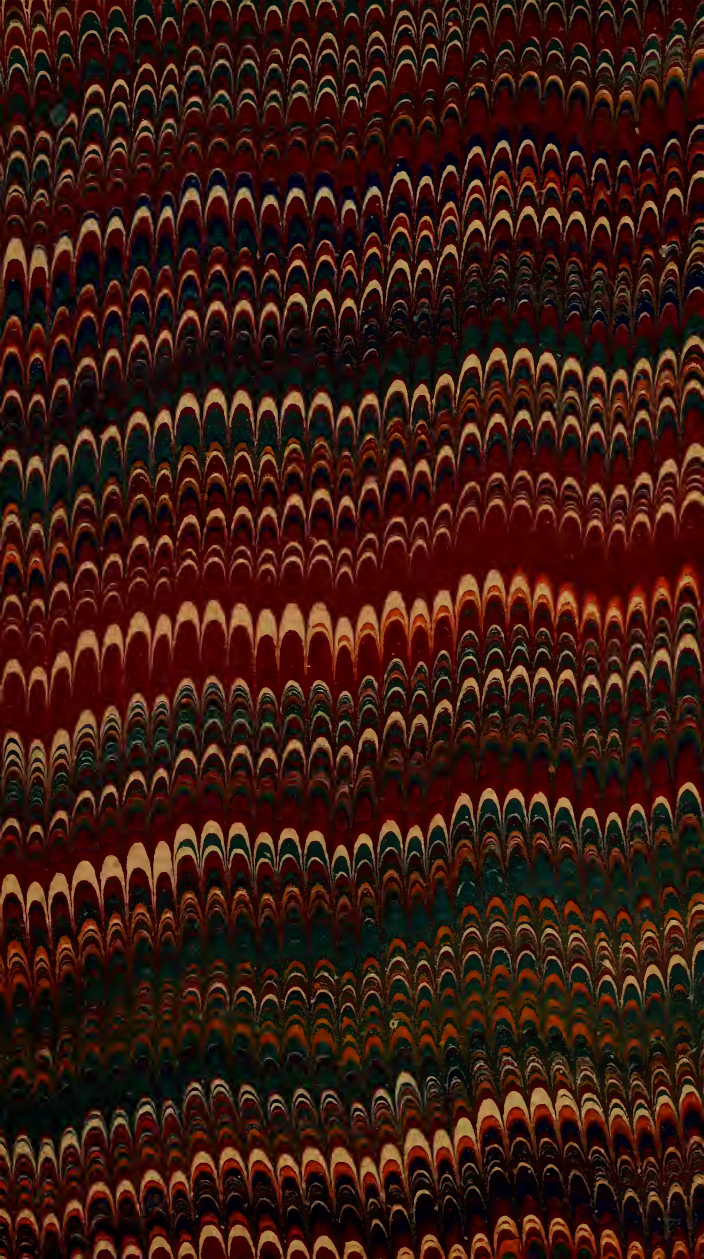












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